

REMARKS

Claims 1-10, all the claims pending in the application, stand rejected. Claims 1-10 are amended. New claim 11 is added.

The amendments to claim 1 and the content of new claim 11 are based on the description on page 8, lines 3 to 6 and page 8, lines 7 to 9 of the original specification, respectively.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

Claims 1, 2, and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. This rejection is traversed for at least the following reasons.

The Examiner notes that claims 1, 2, and 6 cite the step of "using" the salt. The Examiner finds it unclear as to what steps are performed while using the salt.

Applicants have amended these claims in order to overcome the rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

Claims 1-10 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Forker, Jr, et al. (US 3,773,489). This rejection is traversed for at least the following reasons.

As a preliminary matter, Applicants wish to note that the claims have been amended in order to clearly distinguish between (1) chemical strengthening salt grains and (2) powdery chemical strengthening salt materials.

Forker

The Examiner notes that Forker teaches a chemical strengthening treatment wherein a glass disk is brought into contact with molten salt (col. 1, lines 12-16) and that the salt is in a molten state, "which implies that the salt was initially solid and melted down." The Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to use a granular form of $K_2Cr_2O_7$ so that the salt would melt faster.

The Examiner asserts that, regardless of the means to produce the granular form, the granular $K_2Cr_2O_7$ is melted and the molten salt would not be affected by the means to granulating the salt (lines 10 to 12 of the second paragraph). This assertion is based on both (1)

usual common knowledge of those skilled in the art and (2) their prejudice concerned with the salt used in a chemical strengthening treatment process.

Present Invention Based on Clear Teaching Against the Art

In marked contrast, the present invention aims to overcome the usual common knowledge and the prejudice concerned with the salt. Specifically, the inventors have found out that results of the chemical strengthening treatment process depend not only on temperatures of salt baths (as mentioned in Forker) but also on pre-molten states before the salt is molten, as mentioned on page 21, lines 7 to 13 of the instant specification.

Since Forker is never directed to a pre-molten state of baths of $K_2Cr_2O_7$ and $KCl-K_2Cr_2O_7$, Applicants strongly submits that the present invention is NOT obvious from Forker and is patentable over it. Forker teaches against, and opposite to, the invention. In the absence of any reason for going against the art, the claims must be patentable.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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